

# IT HAPPENED IN OREM

A Bicentennial History of Orem, Utah

by

Orem Bicentennial History Committee

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### GETTING HOP POLES IN POLE CANYON

The canyons and mountains supplied the pioneers with all of their wood. I learned while I was young that we actually depended on them for our lives. I was ten years old when I went on my first excursion up Pole Canyon

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On my first trip, my job was to drag to the wagon the poles that my brothers cut down. Each pole was eighteen to twenty feet long and tapered. When the wood was loaded, the small ends extended eight to ten feet beyond the rear axle of the wagon.

On the way home I chose to ride on the slender springy limbs at the back. I thought this would make the boring ride home interesting. My brother tried to get me to ride in front with him, but it didn't appeal to me. After riding over a hundred yards of smooth soft road, we came to a rocky section. I was thrown up in the air a foot and thrown to the side twice as far every time the wagon wheels went over a big rock. After five minutes I knew I had been foolish to ride in the back, but I hated to admit it, so I insisted on staying where I was. By the time we had reached the main canyon I had had enough. I was mighty grateful when my brother stopped the team and helped me fix a comfortable seat up front. It was unpleasant riding in the new seat, too. Even it jolted me as the wheels went over the rocks, but it was better than my first seat.

### A SURPRISE PARTY

On one of our trips up Pole Canyon my brother, Will, and I chose to go up a very steep and rocky

section in which no wood had been cut for several years. I took Father's team and Will took his own. We drove the wagons as far as the horses could pull them, then we uncoupled the hind wheels and went into the woods with only the front halves of the wagons.

Will cut and dragged out all of his land and part of mine. The big ends of the poles were loaded on a cart and the small ends dragged on the ground. Then we bound them to the cart with a chain and lever. I had not gone one hundred feet before my load tipped over. I felt very much humiliated, and resolved not to let it happen again. The upset had come so quickly, though, that I didn't see what had caused it, so I didn't know how to avoid it. As a matter of fact, my load tipped over four times before I had even driven a mile. Fortunately, the load tipped against the side of the canyon twice, but the other two times I had to completely reload. I was relieved when we finally got our wagons coupled together and the loads secured on the wagons.

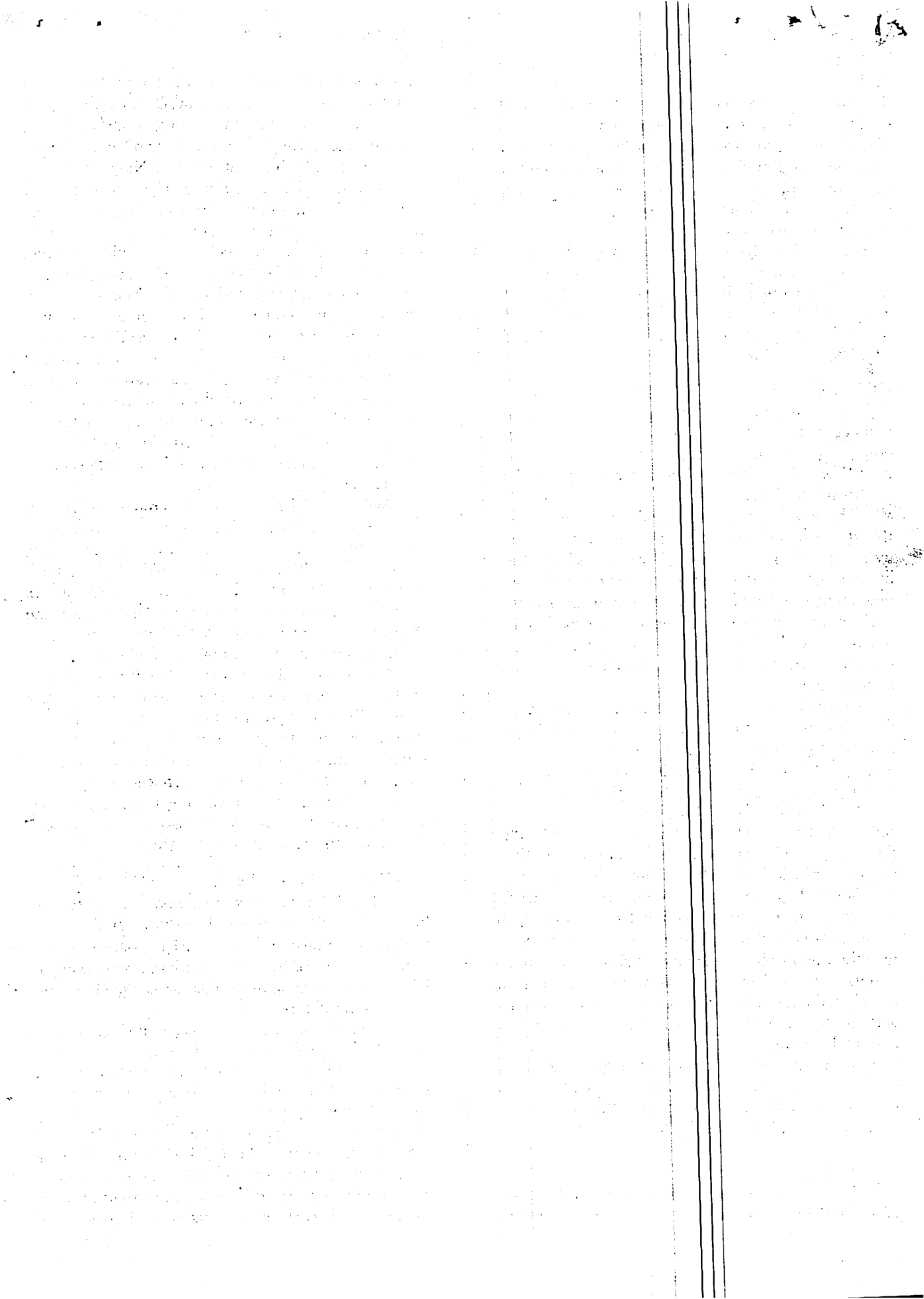
Will looked the loads over and remarked that my load was rather small. He suggested that we cut some more wood. I told him that it would make us late getting home, but, he said it wouldn't take long. I wondered, after all the trouble my load had caused, why he would want to get more poles. However, the thought of bringing a small load down the street changed my mind, so we built up my load.

It was nine o'clock at night when the teams were finally put away, and I walked into the house. As I entered the door a group of boy and girls came in from the other rooms shouting, "Surprise." I had nothing to say just then, but it dawned on me that the trip up the canyon to get poles had just been a way of getting me out of the house. The following day I was to go to Salt Lake City to begin an LDS mission to the Southern States and this was a farewell party.

### GETTING LUMBER IN PROVO CANYON

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We spent a number of days getting logs down to the mill. To get them to the wagon, they had to be dragged a mile or two over a drag trail that curved around rocks and trees, and over large protruding rocks. At some places where the drag road turned abruptly, it was necessary to cut a new trail. When we reached the wagon, we loaded the logs on by drawing them up one at a time parallel to the wagon. We placed skids under the log and tied them to the top of the wagon wheels. A chain was fastened to the wagon and







run under and back over the log and on across the wagon and hitched to a horse. By leading the horse, the log could be rolled up the skids and into the wagon.

The sawmill man cut our logs into twenty-foot long boards. Father was happy to get the lumber for his new barn.

## THE GUN

When my brothers and I were young, we were taught how to use a gun. We were permitted to use it whenever we pleased. Sometimes when we had an hour to spare, we went hunting.

We carried the shot in a flask made of metal or of leather. We made our own powder horn by sawing the ends off a cow's horn, plugging the small end with a removable plug and fitting the large hole with a piece of wood held in place with small nails. The gun had to be standing straight up with the stock on the ground in order to load it. We put about a teaspoonful of powder in the muzzle of the gun, then tamped firmly down on the powder. A teaspoon of shot was dropped down the barrel and patted into place with a tight fitting wad. A cap of primer was placed over a little tube that connected with the powder. Then the gun was ready to fire.

We hunted mourning doves that frequented the grain fields. Sometimes we got rabbits that were hiding in the ditches and in the sagebrush near the edge of the cleared land. If we were lucky we got some ducks and geese that lived near the ponds and waterways.

## HUNTING RABBITS

In early days we preserved meat by drying, smoking, or salting it. In warm weather we depended on chickens and rabbits for our meat. The wild rabbits were plentiful, so we ate them more than chicken.

Sometimes a group of neighbors would go out with shotguns on a drive for meat. They would form a line, with each hunter about fifty yards apart, and walk for several miles through the sagebrush. The rabbits, whenever they could, would sneak between the hunters and get behind them. They were the same color as the sagebrush, so if they stayed behind a bush and moved slowly, they escaped. If one learned that he had been seen, he usually started running ahead of the line of hunters as hard as he could go. He would run rapidly for a rod or two, then run swiftly to the right or left or even straight back in an effort to get behind the hunters. Very often before the men reached the point where they had seen him last, the rabbit would be safely behind them. Most hunters had sharp eyes, so it didn't take long to get all the meat they needed. A wagon always followed the hunters to

gather up the kill. At the end of the hunt there would be five or six rabbits for each of the hunters' families and a few for any other family in the neighborhood that could use them.

In the winter just after a snowfall, we hunted rabbits on horseback. All we needed was a good horse, a saddle and a loop of heavy rope about five feet long with which to kill the rabbits. When we came to a fresh rabbit track, we followed it until the rabbit jumped out, and then the chase began. Snow did not hinder a running horse, but it was a handicap for the rabbit. At first the rabbit would lead out with two or three short jumps and a great leap, and then stumble in the snow. The rabbit did have one advantage, though, he determined his own course, and the man and horse were at a disadvantage as they had to follow. Sometimes the horse would go on one side of some sagebrush and the man would try to guide him to the other side. The rider would lean to the side he was expecting to go and if the horse jumped the other way, the rider fell off. If the horse was forced to change directions quickly, sometimes both the horse and rider fell.

After a short chase, the rabbit got wobbly and dodged off in all directions. The horse easily caught up with him and the rider knocked the rabbit out with a lick from his heavy swinging rope.

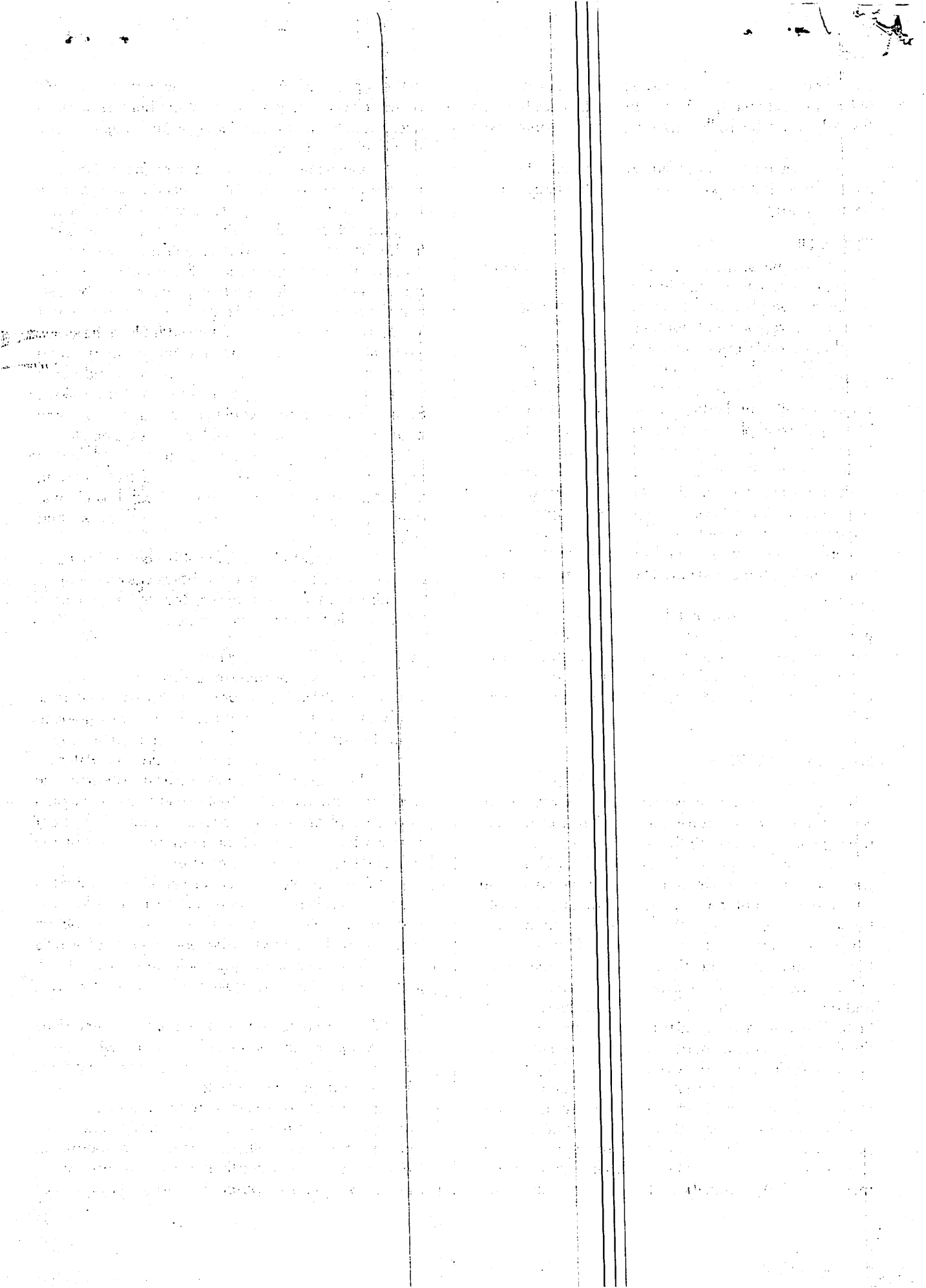
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One Sunday morning my brother Ernest and I set out on a walk up the canyon. On weekdays we rode our horses up the trail, but this day we were going to walk. I carried the canteen and some lunch; Ernest carried his new forty-sixty-five repeating rifle. After we had walked about half a mile, Ernest noticed some fresh bear tracks on the trail ahead of us. We would have been pleased to get a shot at the animal. We kept a sharp lookout for half an hour or more, but the tracks disappeared so we gave up.

We walked on for half a mile and then climbed to the top of a ridge where there was no more timber and vegetation. Before us was an inverted cone-shaped depression. It seemed to be one quarter of a mile across. The sides of this great hole were covered with jagged rocks that had broken off from the towering cliffs around us.

We noticed some movement among some large rocks at the bottom of the hole. Four or five animals were running about. They looked as large as big dogs. They were dark, nearly black.

Ernest rested on a stone, took careful aim at one, and fired. The animals vanished instantly. Since they didn't reappear, we walked down to where they were. We were surprised to see that the rocks were only half as large as we had supposed them to be. The crevices



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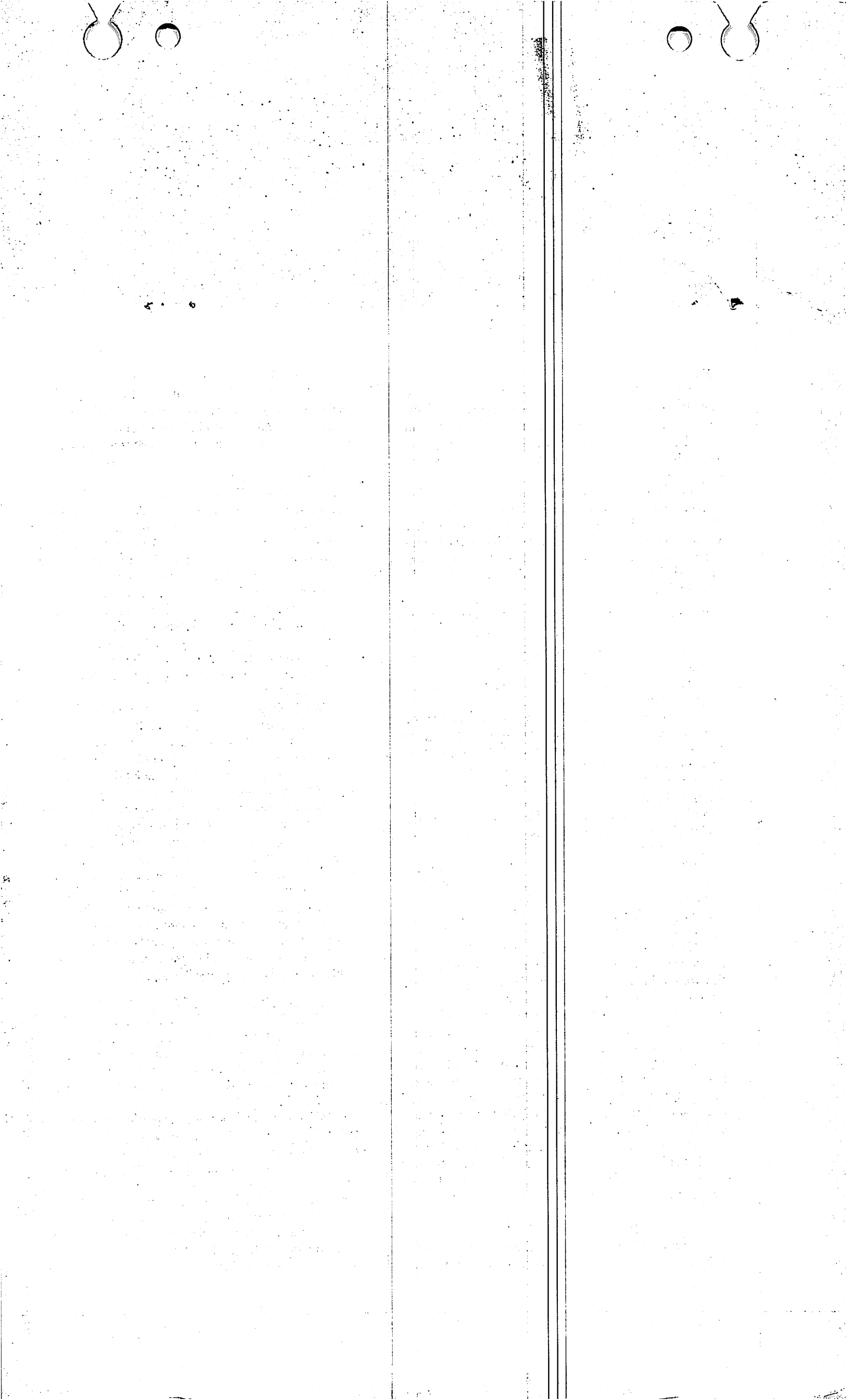
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